

REMARKS

Claim 8 has been amended. New dependent claims 17 and 18 depending ultimately from claim 8 have been added. A new independent claim 19 and new dependent claims 20 – 27 depending ultimately therefrom have been added. Claims 8 - 27 are currently pending in the present application.

In the Office Action, claims 8 - 15 are rejected under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph, and claims 8 - 16 are rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph. Moreover, in the Office Action, claims 8, 10-14, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Poe US Patent No. 4,114,509. Also, in the Office Action, claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Poe US Patent No. 4,114,509, and further in view of Funaki US Patent No. 4,423,608 and Hoyle et al US Patent No. 5,129,768. Additionally, in the Office Action, claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Poe US Patent No. 4,114,509, and further in view of Wollar et al US Patent No. 4,610,587.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 8 – 15 under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph, and claims 8 - 16 under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, should be withdrawn for the reasons that claims 8 – 16 are not indefinite and clearly define the present invention.

Applicants also submit that added claims 8 – 16 patentably define over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. Independent claim 8 of the present application recites an attachment apparatus for attaching a first structure to a second structure of a household appliance. The inventive attachment apparatus, as recited in independent claim 8 of the present application, includes a holding pin, the holding pin having a head portion and a foot portion. The holding pin is disposable, during an installation operation, into a fully fitted position in which the holding pin extends through

an aperture in the first structure and through an aperture in the second structure along an attachment axis passing through the apertures of the first structure and the second structure. As further recited in independent claim 8 of the present application, the head portion of the holding pin, in the fully fitted position of the holding pin, is located on one axial side of the first structure and the foot portion, in the fully fitted position of the holding pin, extends into the aperture of the second structure.

Continuing with the recitation of independent claim 8 of the present application, the holding pin engages the first structure and the second structure to maintain the first structure at an axial spacing from the second structure in the region of the apertures of the first and second structures. Also, the foot portion of the holding pin has a nominal transverse extent that is transverse to the axial extent of the holding pin and at least as large as the largest transverse extent of the aperture of the second structure and the foot portion of the holding pin has, in the fully fitted position of the holding pin, at a smaller transverse extent than its nominal transverse extent. The foot portion of the holding pin exerts a radially outward force against the aperture of the second structure to thereby resist dislodgement of the holding pin from the aperture of the second structure in the fully fitted position of the holding pin.

Continuing further with the recitation of independent claim 8 of the present application, the head portion of the holding pin has a transverse extent transverse to the axial extent of the holding pin that is larger than a transverse extent of the aperture of the first structure. Moreover, the holding pin further includes a first seating extent that is at a location axially intermediate the head portion of the holding pin and the foot portion of the holding pin and that has a transverse extent less than the transverse extent of the foot portion of the holding pin. The recited first seating extent extends axially from the head portion of the holding pin to the foot portion of the holding pin in an axial extent that is at least equal to an axial thickness of the first structure as measured at the aperture of the first structure. In the fully fitted position of the holding pin, the first seating extent is

axially coincident with the first structure at the first aperture and the head portion of the holding pin and the foot portion of the holding pin are disposed on opposite axial sides of the first structure with the head portion of the holding pin and the foot portion of the holding pin each resisting a respective axial movement of the first structure therewith, wherein the holding pin limits axial movement of the second structure relative to the first structure in the fully fitted position of the holding pin.

It is respectfully submitted that independent claim 8 patentably defines over the prior art of record.

United States Patent No. 4,114,509 to Poe discloses an expandable grommet 1 and an expander plunger 2. The expandable grommet 1 is provided with a bore 3 and is provided at one end with an external flange 4. Adjacent the flange is formed an external channel 5. Extending axially with respect to the channel 5 is a set of four fingers 6 separated by axially extending slots 7. One of the uses of a fastener of this type is to removably secure two panels 22 and 23 together as shown in FIG. 3. If it is desired that the fastener be permanently secured to panel 22, this panel is provided with a perforation 24 which is slightly smaller than the diameter of the fingers 6. To support the grommet, the plunger is inserted partway, as indicated by dotted lines in FIG. 1. The grommet is then positioned over a perforation 24 and axial force is applied by the plunger 2 causing the fingers to restrict sufficiently for the fingers to pass through the panels 22 as shown in FIG. 2. However, if the plunger is carelessly manipulated or the grommet is not properly aligned with the perforation, the expander head 13 of the plunger may snap passed the constriction or retainer flange 8 and engage the beveled inner edge 10 of the constriction 9 causing the fingers to expand in the manner indicated in FIG. 3 so that the plunger and grommet are interlocked without the fingers entering the perforation 24.

United States Patent No. 4,610,587 to Wollar et al teaches five embodiments of a fastener device 10, 110, 210, 310, and 410. Each fastener device has a hollow

expandable body member 20, including a body shank 24, a body head 26, and a plurality of legs 28, that is insertable into aligned panel apertures 12 and 14. The legs 28 are separated by an axially extending slot 30. Each fastener device also includes a cylindrical bore 34 extending axially through the body head 26, the body shank 24, and between the legs 28. The diameter of the body member 20 is smaller than the diameter of the aligned apertures 12 and 14. However, it is clear that United States Patent No. 4,610,587 to Wollar et al does not teach or disclose a holding pin having the features recited in claim 8 of the present application including, for example, a first seating extent that, in a fully fitted position of the holding pin, is axially coincident with a structure at a first aperture and a head portion of the holding pin and a foot portion of the holding pin disposed on opposite axial sides of the structure with the head portion of the holding pin and the foot portion of the holding pin each resisting a respective axial movement of the structure therewith, wherein the holding pin limits axial movement of a second structure relative to a first structure in the fully fitted position of the holding pin.

United States Patent No. 5,129,768 to Hoyle et al teaches a sliding grommet 10 for mounting in an elongated hole 32, the grommet 10 including a head flange 12, a shank portion 21, a pair of Y-shaped members 40, and a reinforcing rib 48. The shank portion 21 includes a flared out upper section 26 (see sloping bore 36) and a cylindrical lower portion 29. The upper section 26 includes shoulders 30 for engaging the upper and lower edges of an elongated hole 32. As seen in Figure 7 of United States Patent No. 5,129,768 to Hoyle et al, a mating panel 52 is retained between the head of a screw 56 and a head flange 12 of the sliding grommet 10 and, additionally, another panel 34 is retained between the head flange 12 of the sliding grommet 10 and legs 40a, 40b, of the sliding grommet 10. However, United States Patent No. 5,129,768 to Hoyle et al does not teach or disclose a holding pin having the features recited in claim 8 of the present application including, for example, a foot portion of a holding pin that exerts a radially

outward force against an aperture of a second structure to thereby resist dislodgement of the holding pin from the aperture of the structure.

United States Patent No. 4,726,722 to Wollar teaches a two-piece reusable plastic fastener 10 including a hollow body 12 having a body head 24, a body shank 26, and a bore 32. The body shank 26 includes three shank portions 28, 30, and 31. Body shank portion 28 also includes locking tabs 54, projections 56, and free ends 58. Body shank portion 28 has a diameter that is larger than a diameter of body shank portion 30. Body shank portion 31 extends from body shank portion 30 into a point 34. In use, body 12 is inserted into a hole 20 of a panel 16 such that shank portion 28 enters hole 20. However, United States Patent No. 4,726,722 to Wollar does not teach or disclose a holding pin having the features recited in claim 8 of the present application including, for example, a foot portion of a holding pin that exerts a radially outward force against an aperture of a second structure to thereby resist dislodgement of the holding pin from the aperture of the structure.

For these and other reasons, it is submitted that neither United States Patent No. 4,610,587 to Wollar et al nor United States Patent No. 5,129,768 to Hoyle et al, either alone or in combination with each other or with United States Patent No. 4,114,509 to Poe, teach or suggest the subject matter defined by independent claim 8. Claims 9 – 15 depending ultimately from claim 8 and are submitted to be allowable for at least the same reasons as discussed above and also because these claims recite additional patentable subject matter. Additionally, it is submitted that independent claim 16 patentably defines over the prior art of record as well.

Additionally, it is submitted that new independent claim 19 and new dependent claims 20 – 27 depending ultimately therefrom patentably define over the prior art of record.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of claims 8-27 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,



Russell W. Warnock
Registration No. 32,860
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BSH Home Appliance Corporation
100 Bosch Boulevard
New Bern, NC 28562
Phone: 252-672-7927
Fax: 714-845-2807
russ.warnock@bshg.com